

Appendix 3

OKL HEADQUARTERS, BDM SCULE at STRUB

On May 12th, Oeser, Rood, Eldridge and Coolidge paid a visit to the BDM Schule at Strub which had been the last active H.Q. of OKL. This was now scattered about the school, the Hotel Berchtesgadener Hof and Thumersbach near Zell-am-See. The buildings were bare of all but non-essential papers. In the basements the teleprinter room and telephone exchanges were intact, but all the wheels had been removed from secret teleprinters, of which there were six. The building above the teleprinter basement was in process of being re-occupied by the Chief of Staff of O.K.L., General Koller, and his various heads of departments and aides, all of whom had good telephone communications with Kesselring, Martini, von Winter, and other high staff officers in the Berchtesgadener Hof and their staffs in Thumersbach, Saalfelden and Alm.

During the preliminary search, Major RAWISCH, signals officer, appeared. His first move was - very politely - to foil us in the act of liberating three neat little Mercedes-Benz, by producing written authority for possessing and using them. This having been achieved - for no-one in, or even attached to, TICOM would disregard orders signed by Kesselring (F.M.) and stamped by the 101st Airborne Division! - we settled down to the more hum-drum business of interrogation. Rawisch was trying to rebuild the shattered signals organisation. A policeman before he joined the Luftwaffe, he was well aware of the advantages of displaying courteous cooperation; but he knew little about the fate of the Sturgeon wheels.

When the party emerged from the basement, Eldridge and Coolidge went off to inspect the other buildings. Rood and Oeser were intercepted by General Koller, who wished to enlist the help of "the first Airforce officers he had seen". Specifically, he wanted us to re-assemble his staff "so that I can start work again" "How can I work without a staff?", he asked, not unreasonably.

Now we wanted to know just that; where was the staff, in particular, where were Obstlt. Kienitz (Intelligence) and Obstlt. Friedrich (Y-Service)? Koller told us. He also telephoned General Martini (Director-General of G.A.F. Signals) about the missing drums; was referred to Martini's C. of S., Oberst Morgenstern, summoned him and interrogated him on our behalf. It appeared that one, Hptm. Krause, had been ordered to hide the drums, and had last been seen standing forlornly on the road in the path of the American advance.++ Rawisch showed us some more T52 machines stored in a massive concrete bunker. These too, had been made unusable. Gen. Koller also revealed the location of the BRANDENBURG trains.

Rood and Oeser thereupon set out for Zell-am-See. They went by a road through the mountains, and, taking the jeep over rocks, meadows and snowdrifts to circumnavigate a blown bridge, got through without meeting road patrols, and thus remained in ignorance of the order by the 101st Div. that no one was allowed into the "German" area.

(++Footnote. Our security cover was that the conditions of capitulation forbade the use of all cypher equipment. Rood on behalf of 6 AG and Oeser on behalf of "G.H.Q." were inspecting various H.Q.'s to see that this condition was observed; but about cyphers as such they appeared rather ignorant.)

GERMAN HEADQUARTERS, ZELL AREA, May 13th-16th.

The whole of this area was under German control with rather casual supervision by the 101st Airborne Division through the 356th Parachute Regiment. OKL, with its intelligence and various departments, was at Thumersbach, where there were also bodies from the Vienna Institute of Physics and Physiology and of the Vienna police. The main object of the visit had been to locate Oberstleutnante Kienitz and Friedrich, who were duly found after a certain amount of German unwillingness to say which house they occupied had been overcome.

It was clear that advance information of the impending visit by R.A.F. and Air Corps officers had been telephoned to them. No documents were found other than a small personal collection of Russian Air and Army order of battle and appreciations retained by Kienitz, and after placing these officers in the custody of General von Criegern (Gen. Qu. O.K.L.), Oeser and Rood left for Saalfelden to inspect the Brandenburg trains. Two of the trains contained new and intact T 52 E's. It was ordered that they should be dismantled and placed under guard by 356 P. R.

Appendix 3 (continued)

From Saalfelden, the trail led to Alm, where the main staffs of O.B. West were found. The chief Signals Officer of O.B. West, General Würster, very kindly supplied the information that FuFe Trupp 19 (known to constant readers as Jellyfish) was located in some farmhouses at Dorfheim. Jellyfish was duly found, ready to function, curiously enough within a few hundred yards of the Brandenburg trains. After a rapid inspection and having taken photographs of SZ 42 to the undisguised dismay of the officer in charge, Oberlt. Wurm, the spearhead withdrew to consider further tactics.

The situation was strange in that the Germans appeared in relatively self-possessed control of the situation and that the 101st. Div. was reluctant to permit entry into the area, let alone removal of bodies or equipment. In Berchtesgaden itself, Kesselring, Koller and Co. were busy 'building up their staffs', quite unconvinced that the war was irrevocably at an end. Koller and his staff officers were all eager to help us, as they believed that we wanted their cooperation against the Russians. At Thumersbach, and even in the heart of the 'occupied' zone in Berchtesgaden, considerable truculence was manifested by some officers when we walked into their midst. They were all armed, had their own Tommy-gunned sentries at the entrances, and their own transport. Koller was difficult to contact again, as he was constantly en route for the Zell area and as far afield as Kitzbühl and Wasserburg.

We outstared - and on one occasion shouted down - the truculence. But the problem of security began to assume menacing proportions; and the problem of doing a Carter Paterson on the Jellyfish station baffled us, since Diesel trucks cannot be jeeped cross-country around broken bridges. The moot point was: who would shoot us first - the Germans, the Americans or TICOM?

On May 15th Oeser went to Augsburg to send a long report to TICOM. Rood turned from rustling to honesty, used the authority of his 6 A.G. shoulder flash and persuaded the 101st. G-2 to let him move three of the Jellyfish trucks as far as Berchtesgaden.

On the same day, Shaef ordered all personnel, materiel and documents to be 'frozen' in the area; and the Supreme Commander ordered all German Officers to leave the fleshpots of the Berchtesgadener Hof for the Strub Barracks. (There they celebrated their reunion so well that two officers had to be sent to hospital with broken legs, and others remained sotto blotto for 36 hours and could not be interrogated)

Between May 15th and 18th, TICOM sent an agitate of signals reversing previous policy as to the disposal of POW's, and various organisations moved into the area to unfreeze documents and equipment. On the 18th, Shaef Air Staff sent a mission under G/C Scott-Farnie to investigate and report. G/C Scott/Farnie spent several hours in consultation with Team I and intervened on its behalf with Gen. Harper. On May 20th, Oeser flew back with the mission to Rheims. On the 16th, the rest of the Jellyfish trucks, receivers and transmitters with operating personnel and mechanics had also been taken off by Rood and Oeser from Dorfheim, and the whole convoy under Major Tester sent to Augsburg. (See Appendix 7 for the rest of the story) The visit to Rheims made it possible to have orders sent to 7th Army, with which the convoy was at last able to proceed to the U.K.

From now on matters moved on a relatively even keel, as the diary shows. More documents were found, and the BAUDOT equipment caused no such anxiety as the Jellyfish had. A second liaison visit to Shaef - by now at Frankfurt - enabled TICOM to get the four boxes of Sigint documents which had been impounded by an USSTAF team. Agreement was reached with Air and Army Sigint in the posting of a permanent TICOM representative to Shaef to follow up information beginning to come in from all sides.